423 671 can be taken away only in accordance with the provisions of the law." This insured the individual household in possession of its own piece of land and made it possible for the more industrious to undertake the improvement of the soil.

By the time that the final form of the Labor Code was established on November 22, 1922, it had become almost essentially different from the Russian Code, although it paid a lip service to the principle of nationalization through the actions of the Land Societies. A further sign of submission was the establishment of maximums on landholding. No household in the densely settled areas could have more than fourteen hectares or, in the less thickly populated areas, forty-eight hectares. The Land Society had the right to decide on the form of exploitation of the land to be carried out but if a family disagreed with the form established, it was entitled to demand the same amount of land but not necessarily the same land that it had contributed. Furthermore, outside of the requirement that all members of household were compelled to labor personally on the land, the provisions dealing with hired labor and the renting of land were left purposely vague or were omitted for further study.

The new code, which was more liberal than that in Russia, was devised in the interests of the landless peasants and also the poor and middle peasants, and definitely ratified the seizure of the estates of the large landowners. Sixty-eight per cent of the landless peasants received small tracts of land and fifty-two percent of those with holdings from two to four hectares were settled under more favorable conditions, or received additional land. On the other hand, 27.2% of those with more than sixteen hectares, the normal holding, and 56.8% of those with more than twenty-five hectares, saw their additional land removed and handed over to their less fortunate neighbors. In a sense this might seem to have been a solution of the crying need of the peasants for land but it brought with it some unexpected results.

423 427 The civil war had completely destroyed any free capital, and without capital the peasants could not buy the tools, the fertilizers, etc., which they needed to prosper. This made little difference in

the very beginning, for at the moment the primary need was for food and the peasants were compelled to live upon what they could raise. It was not long before the returning prosperity commenced new differentiations in the villages. The poorer peasants began to take advantage of the provisions that they could lease their newly acquired land, and while the Russian law provided that a lease could run for only three years, the Ninth All-Ukrainian Congress of Soviets soon lengthened this term to 13 years and liberalized the laws for hired labor.

The result was that by 1926, the poor peasants had leased 1,181,000 hectares and 53.9% of the peasants who had at least ten hectares rented additional land.

In a word, under the New Economic Policy conditions began, in fact, to return to what had been the situation prior to the revolution, with the exception that the great land owners had disappeared, but as they had been largely Russian or Polish, their departure only increased the Ukrainian influence in the villages and made them more homogeneous than they had been before.

The Commissariat of Agriculture endeavored during these years of reconstruction to maintain as independent a position as possible. It established its own independent services, its own research stations which were concerned with Ukrainian agricultural problems, its own breeding stations and its own bureaus for study and development of the various branches of agriculture, and it did its best to separate these from the similar services directed by Moscow and not concerned with the particular problems of Ukraine.

The peasants responded to this with their own efforts. In 1922, with the famine still raging, they secured permission from Moscow to establish the so-called Selo-Pomich (or Village Aid) to provide credit for the peasants. This finally persuaded the Cheka to hand over part of the golden objects which they had stolen from the churches, and it used the capital thus secured to buy seed corn in America. It then loaned this to the peasants and when the harvest came, the loan was repaid in kind and more credit was then extended.

656 had profited by the operation of the Ukrainian land code which,
471 as we have seen, was less rigid than were the similar arrangements
661 in the RSFSR, where the land society was organized far more on
● [427] the lines of a collective than it was in Ukraine. It was always possible to apply individually any of the laws against the leasing of land or the employment of hired help, for in both cases the provisions had been left vague and indefinite, so that the authorities could act whenever they so desired. As a matter of fact, as one of the first measures the administration of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic reduced the period on which a lease could be made from thirteen to six years and thus it was easily possible to upset many of the calculations that had been made by the richer and more progressive landowners.

[435] At the same time the closing of the official markets rendered it possible for the government to force the peasants to dispose of their grain at the officially pegged prices which in the grain-growing districts were considerably lower than they were in the less fertile areas of the north. If this did not produce the desired results, it was equally possible to demand the grain tax in kind and to compel the peasants to turn over, free of charge and under the guise of payments, additional supplies. All these measures, which were introduced in many cases personally and not by districts, caused the peasants to feel themselves becoming steadily more impoverished and less able to resist the demands of the government.

631 On the other hand, the All-Union Commissariats which took
642 precedence over those in the individual Soviet republics and which were, in reality, staffed only by Russian Communists, effectively broke the power of the localities or of the republics to have any special voice in the management of their own affairs.[1] This was, in its turn, skilfully explained by stressing the superior requirements of the Union which, on any closer analysis, turned out to be the interests of the Russian area. Thus, at the XVth Congress of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks), a Russian who was at the time the chief of the Ukrainian State Planning Commission remarked in an unambiguous manner: "It seems to me that we must assign perfectly clear tasks, to emphasize that the national

[1] [1925, during relinquishment of NEP -- Analyst]